

# Nevada Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Dead Crow in Carson City Tests Positive for West Nile Virus**

Reno- On Friday, July 16, 2004, a sample swab taken from a dead crow found in Carson City tested positive for West Nile Virus. The presence of viral RNA was confirmed later that evening. This represents the first hard evidence of West Nile Virus in Nevada. State officials are continuing to monitor the situation, but tests on mosquitoes, so far, have come back negative.

Washoe County District Health Department's Vector Borne disease program staff installed 20 mosquito traps in the immediate vicinity of where the crow was found. Only one mosquito pool (all *Culex tarsalis*) was collected in a 24 hour period, indicating a very low vector prevalence. This one pool was submitted to the Nevada Department of Agriculture for testing in the Animal Disease Laboratory and the results were negative.

Mosquito trapping and dead/sick bird surveillance will be significantly enhanced over the next few weeks, maybe even months, depending on incidence and prevalence of West Nile Virus in host species and vectors.

Dr. David Thain, State Veterinarian for Nevada said, "The dead crow was reported to Carson City Health Department by an alert citizen who knew we were looking for dead birds to test." Dead and sick bird reporting is an important component to our surveillance efforts. "NDOA encourages Nevada citizens to visit our web site and learn more about how they can significantly help boost our dead/sick bird surveillance," Thain added.

Horse owners in Nevada should vaccinate their horses against WNV as soon as possible. In California, there was one case of equine West Nile virus reported last year. This year there have been 26 cases reported and 11 of those 26 horses have died.

West Nile Virus is a health concern for not only the individual, but the entire community. "It is important that individuals continue to practice preventive behaviors," Dr. Bradford Lee, Nevada State Health Officer said. "While we haven't detected a human case of WNV in Nevada, it is important that people remember to do the following:

- Apply insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors, especially during dawn or dusk
- When possible, wear long sleeves, long pants and socks
- Drain standing water from around your house
- Check the screens on your home to make sure they fit properly

The Nevada West Nile Virus Working Group has been preparing for WNV to arrive in Nevada since last year. The group's members consist of the Nevada Division of Health, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Washoe County District Health Department, Carson City Health Department, Clark County Health District, Clark County Vector Control, Churchill County Mosquito Abatement District, Mason Valley Mosquito Abatement District, Pyramid Lake Indian Tribe, and Indian Environmental Health Services.

The Nevada West Nile Virus Working Group also has an interlocal agreement between most members. This agreement enables districts or agencies to ask for assistance in the event of an emergency from other members of the group.

For more information on West Nile Virus visit <http://agri.nevada.gov> and click on the mosquito icon. For information regarding health effects, visit <http://health2k.state.nv.us> and click on West Nile Virus, under "Hot Topics."

Contacts for the media:

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